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ABSTRACT

A follow-up study was conducted in 1987 to assess the use and effectiveness of "Minimum Library Use Skills: Standards, Test, and Bibliography" (MLUS), which had been distributed to all members of the Wisconsin Association of Academic Librarians in 1985. Some copies of this publication had been sold, and it is also available in ERIC microfiche. A questionnaire was sent to the instruction librarians of 106 academic libraries (22 responses returned) in Wisconsin to determine whether they had used MLUS, and a similar questionnaire was sent to 490 high school library media specialists (30 responses returned) to determine whether they had used MLUS or "Wisconsin Library Media Skills Guide" (WLMSG). Responses to the survey indicated that there was a perceived need for standardized library skills in both academic and high school libraries, and it is suggested that there is also a need for greater cooperation between the two groups in developing their bibliographic instruction programs. Less than 7% of the responding high schools reported using MLUS. Although WLMSG does address many of the competencies outlined in the more recent MLUS, it is suggested that needs would be better served if high school librarians were aware of what academic librarians were expecting of their college bound students, and conversely, academic librarians would better serve their students if they knew what backgrounds these students had. Copies of both survey instruments are appended. (EW)

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MINIMUM LIBRARY USE SKILLS SURVEY

by

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The Education and Library Use Committee of WAAL (Wisconsin Association of Academic Librarians), a division of the Wisconsin Library Association, in 1984, compiled and published Minimum Library Use Skills: Standards, Test, and Bibliography (MLUS). The document identifies the 13 minimum library use skills to be attained by college students by the sophomore year to be successful in college. The test provides examples of questions which may be used to assess college students' knowledge of the 13 minimum library use skills. Many questions are applicable in all libraries, some need to be adapted to a particular library such as testing the knowledge of the physical arrangement of materials and services, and interpreting a library s periodical holdings.

The publication went through two printings (1000 copies). It was distributed to all members of WAAL in 1985. 508 copies were sold. It is also available in ERIC microfiche (ED 263 926).

In 1987, the Education and Library Use Committee did a follow-up study in an attempt to assess the use and effectiveness of the standard library use skills for college and high school students in Wisconsin. A questionnaire was sent to instruction librarians of 106 academic libraries in Wisconsin. A similar questionnaire was sent to 490 high school media specialists to find out if they had ever used this publication or a similar publication the Wisconsin Library Media Skills Guide (WLMSG) published by the Wisconsin School Library Media Association in 1979, which outlines similar skills for students in grades K-12.

Of the 106 academic libraries surveyed, 22 responses were received (20.75%); only 30 of the 490 school media specialists responded (6.1%). A likely explanation for this low response rate may be poor timing, since the surveys were mailed in May, near the end of the academic year. And the issue under study may not have been viewed as directly relevant to their own interests. The result is summarized in Table 1.

ACADEMIC LIBRARIES QUESTIONNAIRE

Of those responding, 63.6% were familiar with the Minimum Library Use Skills and 40.9% used it their BI programs. Some form of library skills document (either MLUS or other) was used by 59.1% of the respondents in developing their instruction program. 81.8% felt that such documents are useful. The questionnaire did not ask why it is not used, but we surmise that in most academic institutions, BI is limited to a single class period, and/or is dependent on faculty cooperation, so it is not feasible to apply tests to students.

Specific other sources used in place of or in addition to the Minimum Library Use Skills include the CRL Standards and Guidelines for BI in Academic Libraries; Conference on Use of College and University Libraries, U. of CA. Berkeley, 1970; EBSS Competencies for Students in Education; and the UW-Parkside Program s objectives.

Three responded that demonstration of competency in library skills is a requirement at their institutions: one is a require-

ment for English 102; one stated that it will be required for teacher certification; and one stated that it is required of students before they have accumulated 65 credits. All three institutions are familiar with the Minimum Library Use Skills, though two did not use it. All three cited using other documents and had developed their own sets of skills or competencies for their students. Two of them use the workbook approach.

HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARIES QUESTIONNAIRE

Of the high school respondents, 93.3% have not used Minimum Library Use Skills though 63.3% have used the Wisconsin Library Media Skills Guide, and 79.1% have used some library skills documents in developing a BI program. Interestingly, many more schools have self-developed programs: 73.3% as compared to 56.4% of academic libraries, and less find such documents useful: 63.3% as compared to 81.8%. More high schools (26.7%) have a library competency requirement than academic institutions (13.6%) as anticipated.

The survey revealed high schools use other sources more often. Among those cited are: curriculum guides from various school districts: goals and objectives developed by schools of the Self Evaluation Consortium in Wisconsin; Ohio Curriculum Outline: Dear Faculty by JoAnne Nordling (Westwood, Ma: Faxon, 1976); Library Media Skills and the Senior High School English Program by Mary Hackman (Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1985); School Librarian as Educator by Lillian Wehmeyer (Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1984); Instruction in School

Library Media Center Use, edited by Thomas L Hart (ALA, 1985); Learning the Library by Anne K. Beaubien and others (N.Y.: Bowker, 1982); and School Library-Media Skills Test by Anne M Hyland (Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1986).

The high school library programs vary as widely as the academic library programs. The spectrum ranges from no program to highly structured programs such as: 10th grade - card catalog, 11th grade - key reference materials, 12th grade - online database searching. Many programs in between have library skills units incorporated with English classes.

SUMMARY

In summary, our results indicate that indeed there is a perceived need for standardized library skills in both academic libraries and high school libraries. However, we believe also that greater cooperation must be developed between these two groups. Less than 7% of high schools responding reported using the Minimum Library Use Skills in developing their BI programs. Although the Wisconsin Library Media Skills Guide does address many of the competencies outlined in the Minimum Library Use Skills, it would better serve all of our needs if high school librarians were aware of what academic libraries were expecting of their college bound students within the two years following graduation. Conversely, academic librarians would better serve their students if they knew what backgrounds they had.

The Wisconsin Library Media Skills Guide recently underwent a

revision. Any future documents would be more useful if they reflect what is recommended in preceding and succeeding levels of library instruction. In this way, all programs will be better coordinated and proceed at an appropriate rate.

TABLE I

Frequency(%) of YES, NO, & NA Responses to each survey question by Academic (N=22) and High School (N=30) Libraries.

ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Survey Question	Response Frequency (%)		
	Yes	No	NA
Q1: Familarity w/MLUS	14(63.6)	8(36.4)	0(0)
Q2: Use of MLUS	9(40.9)	10(45.5)	3(13.6)
Q3: Use of Other Sources	9(40.9)	13(59.1)	0(0)
Q4: Self-developed Skills/Competency	8(36.4)	14(63.6)	0(0)
Q5: Usefulness of MLUS	18(81.8)	2(9.1)	2(9.1)
Q6: Competency Requirement	3(13.6)	19(86.4)	0(0)

HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Survey Question	Response Frequency (%)		
	Yes	No	NA
Q1: Use of WLMSG	19(63.3)	11(36.7)	0(0)
Q2: Use of MLUS	2(6.7)	28(93.3)	0(0)
Q3: Use of Other Sources	13(43.3)	17(56.7)	0(0)
Q4: Self-developed Skills/Competency	22(73.3)	8(26.7)	0(0)
Q5: Usefulness	19(63.3)	3(10.0)	8(26.7)
Q6: Competency Requirement	8(26.7)	21(70.0)	1(3.3)

MLUS = Minimum Library Use Skills
WLMSG = Wisconsin Library Media Skills Guide

Appendix A - Questionnaire to academic libraries

June 1987

Dear Colleague,

The Education and Library Use Committee of WAAL is attempting to assess the use and effectiveness of standard library use skills for college and high school students in Wisconsin. In 1983-1984, this committee developed the Minimum Library Use Skills (available through ERIC, ED 263 926), which outlines the basic skills that academic librarians in Wisconsin feel ought to be learned by each college/university student within their first two years of college enrollment. If you have implemented or adapted this document to suit the needs of your particular institution, or if you have developed your own set of library competencies, we would greatly appreciate hearing about it. Please answer the following questions and feel free to elaborate and add any comments you may have regarding this issue.

1. Are you familiar with the Minimum Library Use Skills?

2. Have you used the Minimum Library Use Skills in any way in designing a library instruction program? If so, how was it used?

3. Have you used any other similar document in designing or developing an instruction program? If so, please cite the source.

4. Have you developed your own set of skills or competencies for students in your library? Please elaborate as fully as possible (a copy would be helpful, if available).

5. Do you feel such documents are useful? practical? Why or why not?

6. Is demonstration of competency in library skills a requirement in your school (i.e. for a particular class, for graduation, etc.)?

7. Additional comments?

Please return your responses by July 20, 1987 to:

Scott Mandernack
UW - Whitewater Library
Whitewater, Wisconsin 53190

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

Appendix B - questionnaire sent to school media centers

May 1987

Dear Colleague,

The Education and Library Use Committee of the Wisconsin Association of Academic Librarians (WAAL) is attempting to assess the use and effectiveness of standard library use skills for college and high school students in Wisconsin. In 1983 - 1984, this committee developed the Minimum Library Use Skills (available through ERIC, ED 263 926), which outlines the basic skills that academic librarians in Wisconsin feel ought to be learned by each college/university student within their first two years of college enrollment. Another document, the Wisconsin Library Media Skills Guide (published in 1979 by the Wisconsin School Library Media Association), outlines similar skills for students in grades K - 12.

If you have implemented or adapted either of these documents to suit the needs of your particular institution, or if you have developed your own set of library competencies, we would greatly appreciate hearing about it. Please answer the following questions, and feel free to elaborate and add any comments you may have regarding this issue.

1. Have you used the Wisconsin Library Media Skills Guide as a guideline in designing a library instruction program? If so, how was it used? If not, why not?

2. Have you used the Minimum Library Use Skills in any way in designing a library instruction program? If so, how was it used?

3. Have you used any other similar document in designing or developing an instruction program? If so, please cite the source.

4. Have you developed your own set of skills or competencies for students in your library? Please elaborate as fully as possible (a copy would be helpful, if available).

5. Do you feel such documents are useful? practical? Why or why not?

6. Is demonstration of competency in library skills a requirement in your school (i.e. for a particular class, for graduation, etc.)?

7. Additional comments?

Please return you responses by June 19, 1987 to:

Scott Mandernack
UW - Whitewater Library
Whitewater, Wisconsin 53190

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!